Experiential Learning Program at CPS

At the College of Professional Studies, co-ops and internships are optional components of certain bachelors and master’s degree programs. The program follows a "parallel" model, meaning that students work at their internships and co-ops during the day and may take classes at night. This program offers great opportunities for students to explore in-class learning through real-world work, explore career interests and network with potential employers, while employers have the opportunity to bring fresh ideas to projects and build a talent pipeline.

1) Plan Ahead

Speak with your Academic & Student Support Specialist. Every student who does a co-op (paid, 35-40 hours/wk) or internship (paid or unpaid, 10-20 hours/wk) will need to take COP6940 (graduate) or COP3940 (undergraduate) - Personal and Career Development during the first 12 weeks of any internship or co-op. This is a three quarter hour class that can count for an elective as long as you have gotten permission from your department. Students are financially responsible for the 3QHs. Students who need 4 QHs for an elective may arrange an additional 1 credit hour reflection seminar during the second term of their work or upon completion.

Speak with your co-op advisor. Each student will be assigned to work with a co-op advisor from the Office of Cooperative Education based on their academic program. Before you meet with this advisor you should be familiar with the information on this sheet and the co-op website. This advisor will be your primary contact as you prepare and secure an internship or co-op.

We suggest that you start planning for your co-op or internship during your first quarter at the College of Professional Studies. If you are an international student, explore the information for international students’ page on our website to learn about Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization. Undergraduate students holding an F-1 visa must be enrolled full time for one academic year (three consecutive quarters) before engaging in co-op.

Note: Students cannot engage in a co-op or internship if they have previously completed all required coursework for their degree program. For example, if you are completing the quarter hours required for graduation in spring term you may not do a sponsored internship or co-op during the following summer. You must be an active student in order to participate in this program.

2) Apply to the Program

Students who have completed one term at The College of Professional Studies and are interested in an internship/Co-op will activate their profile through our NEXUS database. http://myinterface.com/nu/student A complete profile must be submitted in order for the Cooperative Education staff to begin working with you.

3) Prepare

Once you have activated your NEXUS profile you can be enrolled in a 6 week preparation course called COP 5001 Preparation for Experiential Learning. This course prepares students for finding and securing an internship or co-op. Students will develop a resume, cover letter, branding message, interview skills, a job search strategy and have knowledge of US business etiquette. Students will also gain a greater understanding of the CPS co-op and academic internship policies, procedures and expectations. This course is strongly encouraged for students who have 0-2 years of work experience in the US.

4) Search

You can either find a co-op or internship through the NEXUS database or through your own search using other on and off campus resources. There are no guarantees that every student will find a placement since ultimately you need to interview and be offered a position. In addition to the company “leads” you discover during the preparation course, CPS staff will also try to provide additional leads and offer as much support as possible to help you in your search. There are also ongoing events coordinated by NU Career Services to help you get internships and co-ops.

Students who find a work opportunity on their own can petition to have it become an approved placement. The requirements are the same. Students should send us a job description with the details of the position. We will determine whether it falls into the internship or Co-op category and whether it aligns with the objectives of your program.
5) Start and Engage

Start dates for co-ops and internships must correspond with the quarter starts in September, January, April and July. Check with your co-op advisor about acceptable start dates when you are interviewing so that you can make potential employers aware of your availability. Before you can accept a position you should have a job letter offer including the following information:

- Job title
- Hours/week
- Duration
- Compensation
- Supervisors contact information
- Office location

This information must all be approved by your co-op advisor before you can accept the offer.

Upon acceptance of a position, students will be enrolled by their co-op advisor in COP 6940 or COP 3940 Personal and Career Development. The course is designed to support students as they go through their work placement, help merge work experiences with career exploration and academic goals, and make sure you end up with a very successful experience overall. The course fulfills 3 open elective credits or a portion of a capstone project as long as you have cleared it with your academic division. The course runs every term and you must be enrolled during the first 12 weeks of your internship or co-op. At this stage international students will apply for Curricular Practical Training authorization. Visit our information for international students’ page for more information on this.

Co-op/Internship Timeline

To maximize the chances of finding an internship or co-op during your degree, we recommend you follow the timeline outlined below:

During your first quarter at CPS

- Review program information and eligibility requirements for co-ops and internships listed on our website www.neu.edu/cps/coop
- **Activate your NEXUS profile.** This is our student/employer database that enables employers to post positions and students to review positions.
- Speak with your Academic & Student Support Specialist and your co-op advisor to plan when to engage in a co-op/internship and how the credits will be incorporated in your degree
- Request to be enrolled in COP5001, Preparing for Experiential Learning to work on your resume, cover letter, interviewing skills and much more.

During your second quarter and until you secure a position

- Start networking!
- Identify target positions and companies
- Improve/update/tailor your resume and cover letter
- Apply for co-ops/internships
- Interview at prospective companies

Once you receive an offer for an internship or co-op

- Notify your co-op advisor to make sure the job is approved.
- Confirm your offer with the company and secure a start date based on the next co-op cycle dates.
- **International Students** – Apply for CPT (Curricular Practical Training) authorization through the co-op department. Allow 2-3 weeks for processing. Students cannot begin work until they receive CPT authorization from ISSI
- **International Students** working in a paid position must apply for a Social Security Number once they receive their CPT authorization
- You will be enrolled in a 3 QH, online course COP 6940/3940 Personal and Career Development (students are financially responsible for the 3QH)

While on your co-op/internship

- Participate online in COP 6940/3940
- Stay in touch with your co-op advisor
- Enjoy your co-op or internship!
Eligibility and Definitions for Co-ops

**Co-ops**
- Work related to your degree field
- 12-24 weeks in length (Maximum 2 quarters)
- Paid positions where students negotiate a salary with their employer
- Between 35-40 hours a week
- Accompanied by the 3 QH course: COP3940/6940 Personal and Career Development
- Participation in a co-op constitutes full time status for visa and financial aid purposes. Students do not need to take additional classes other than COP 3940/6940 Personal and Career Development

**Eligibility Requirements for a Co-op:**
- Enrollment in a Bachelors or Master’s degree program
- Cumulative GPA 3.000 or above
- Undergraduates must have completed 42 quarter hours in foundation degree courses at CPS. Graduate students must have completed 21 quarter hours in required courses at CPS.
- Students must be in academic good standing, may not be on academic probation or have an “incomplete” grade for any of their required prerequisites.
- Regulatory Affairs students must complete 20 QHs from Required Courses. Effective spring 2012, all Regulatory Affairs students must complete RGA 6100 and BTC 6210 before enrolling in a co-op or internship.
- Project Management students should complete:
  - PJM 5900 – (for students with less than 2 years of project experience)
  - PJM 6000, PJM 6010, PJM 6015, PJM 6020 (choose only 3 if you took PJM 5900)
  - PJM 6135 or LDR 6110

Eligibility and Definitions for Internships

**Internships**
- Work related to your degree field
- 12-24 weeks in length (Maximum 2 terms)
- Paid or unpaid positions
- 10-20 hours a week
- Accompanied by the 3 QH course: COP3940/6940 Personal and Career Development
- Approved internships do not constitute full time status. Students need to take additional quarter hours to meet their enrollment requirements.

**Eligibility Requirements for an internship:**
- Enrollment in a Bachelors or Master’s degree program
- Cumulative GPA 3.000 or above
- Undergraduate students must have completed 15 quarter hours in foundation degree courses at CPS. Graduate students must have completed 12 quarter hours in required courses at CPS.
- Students must be in academic good standing, may not be on academic probation or have an “incomplete” grade for any of their required prerequisites.
- Regulatory Affairs students must complete 20 QHs from Required Courses. Effective spring 2012, all Regulatory Affairs students must complete RGA 6100 and BTC 6210 before enrolling in a co-op or internship.
- Project Management students should complete:
  - PJM 5900 – (for students with less than 2 years of project experience)
  - PJM 6000, PJM 6010, PJM 6015, PJM 6020 (choose only 3 if you took PJM 5900) PJM 6135